

National Institutes of Health  
Clinical Center  
Nursing & Patient Care Services

**ARTERIAL LINE DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS**

The research study you have completed required the placement of a small catheter into an **ARTERY** in your arm. Therefore, it is **VERY** important for you to take some special precautions over the next 48 hours.

**SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS**

1. Avoid bending the arm or wrist that had the catheter for approximately four hours.
2. **DO NOT PERFORM ANY STRENUOUS ACTIVITY WITH THE ARM THAT HAD THE CATHETER** (e.g., lifting over 10 pounds, sports, pulling, pushing, or grasping) for the next 48 hours. You can shower the next day.
3. The pressure dressing that is now on the site is to remain in place for the next 2-3 hours. After you remove the dressing, carefully check the place where the catheter entered your arm or wrist. Once you have looked at the site, cover it with a Band-Aid. Keep the Band-Aid on the site until the next day.
4. Be aware of any signs of infection (including pain, tenderness, swelling, redness, or drainage) at the site. Also, be aware of any color changes, sensations of numbness, pins and needles or decreased strength in the hand or arm that had the catheter. Check for these symptoms upon removal of the dressing, and then twice a day for two days. If any of these symptoms occur, contact your **NIH PHYSICIAN and/or PERSONAL PHYSICIAN** immediately.
5. Watch for bleeding from the site. If you see bleeding from the site, apply firm direct pressure as taught. After 10 minutes, check for bleeding. If the bleeding has not stopped after 10 minutes, continue to hold pressure and go to the emergency room.
6. Over the next few days, you may note some bruising around the insertion site. This is a result of leakage of blood after the removal of the arterial catheter. Mild bruising is not unusual. If bruising is extensive, **CONTACT YOUR NIH PHYSICIAN and/or YOUR PERSONAL PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.**
7. It is normal to have some discomfort at the site. If the discomfort increases or becomes severe, **CONTACT YOUR NIH PHYSICIAN and/or YOUR PERSONAL PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.**

Phone Number NIH Physician: \_\_\_\_\_